



# *The Virginia Saltwater Review*

*Plans and Statistics Department*  
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Newport News, VA 23607-0756  
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

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by

**Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division**

## **OVERVIEW**

Poor weather has really dampened the fishing over the past week. The good news is that the dreariness is supposed to be moving out soon, so next week should be a great week for fishing! Despite the weather, several anglers were not afraid to get wet last week and landed some nice catches of red and black drum throughout the area. There were also reports of croaker, spot, speckled trout, and a few keeper flounder.

The Black Drum World Championship Fishing Tournament is scheduled for next weekend, May 16-17, in Cape Charles with the Captain's Meeting on Friday, May 15. The VMRC Biological Sampling Team will once again be there to collect biological information from each black drum weighed in, and we'll post that information in the Saltwater Review later this year. For more information about the tournament go to: <http://www.esvachamber.org/festivals/drumfish/>

Please remember that the tautog fishery is closed May 1 through June 24. Also note that the Virginia striped bass trophy season opened May 1 and extends through May 15 in the coastal area and June 15 in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Anglers may keep one fish of 32 inches or greater during the trophy season, provided they turn in a catch report (available through the Virginia Saltwater Journal - <https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com/>). Have a great week of fishing!

**Please note: the Virginia Saltwater Review is only available online. Please feel free to print and distribute to your club or organization as needed.**

## **THE FISHING REPORT**

### **Chincoteague**

Donna, at Captain Bob's, says that the poor weather has really hurt the fishing over the past week in Chincoteague. Only a few flounder were reported from waters near the duck blinds near Captain Bob's. Overall, deeper water is producing better flounder. The holes of Cackle Creek and the structures in Queen's Sound seem to be producing the best fish.

## **Wachapreague**

At the Wachapreague Marina, keeper flounder are still averaging 1 in 10. There were black drum off of Cedar Island this week, but little offshore activity.

Staff at Captain Zed's report that fishing has been good in Wachapreague. Black drum have been doing well in the Wachapreague Inlet and on the east end of Dawson's Shoals. Flounder fishing has been doing really well, and a lot of fish have been caught at Bull's Head and at Buoys 132 to 137 on the outgoing tide, with some keepers. Seal Creek near Swash Bay between Day markers 142 and 147 and Drawing and Green Channels are still productive. Near the Coast Guard Station and southward, anglers have caught numerous flounder. Another hot spot is the Hummock area, on the incoming tide, drifting across Burton's Bay. Staff hasn't heard of any grey trout catches, but they are expecting them any time soon.

## **Cape Charles**

Black drum have been popping up around the area, according to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle. A few have been spotted out of Oyster, and a few more were caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Some nice red drum were landed off of the beaches of Smith Island. At Morley's Wharf, in Exmore, a few croaker were caught last week. There were also reports of flounder catches around Cape Charles.

## **Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel**

At the Sunset Boating Center, poor weekend weather kept most of the anglers on shore. Staff is looking forward to the better weather for the upcoming weekend.

The weather also cut down on fishing at Salt Ponds Marina where staff expects fishing to pick up this weekend.

Staff at the York River Fishing Center reported catches of croaker, speckled trout, and flounder at the Gloucester Point Pier. A 5-pound, 5-ounce speckled trout earned one angler, working in the Ware River, a citation last week.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

With a steady parade of evening thunderstorms this week, the spring Mid-Atlantic fishing scene has taken a slight detour from the usual trend. The biggest interest is still in the emerging drum scene, which is motivating many anglers to gather peelers and crabs, and head for the Eastern Shore shoals between the thunder storms.

Red drum are providing some decent action among the breakers and sloughs near Smith and Fisherman's Islands, especially at night. The best action is still among the breakers, where kayak anglers are taking advantage of this trend right now.

According to Chris at Chris' Bait and Tackle, smallish black drum ranging to about 35 pounds are becoming more active along the Eastern Shore seaside inlets, the surf, and near buoys 13 and 16 on the bayside. The larger fish are still coming from the Quinby areas further north. This trend will also

continue to heat up over the next few weeks, and larger fish will become more common.

With the recent muddy water and excess fresh water from the abundant rain, the flounder scene is still slow within bay waters and around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The best numbers of keeper fish are coming from the Eastern Shore seaside inlets and back waters of Oyster. A few keeper flatfish are also coming from within both Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets.

Healthy puppy drum ranging up to 33 inches are still hitting inside Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets, where anglers are also finding bluefish up to around five pounds and scattered speckled trout. Specks are also available within the Eastern Shore seaside inlets and the back waters of Oyster. Peeler crabs, live bait, and Mirrolures are a good choice for the specks right now.

Many are taking advantage of the Bay's Spring Trophy Striped Bass season. Striped bass are providing a good alternative for those looking for some solid action right now. Anglers working top water lures along the rocks at the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are content with steady hits from fish exceeding the 32-inch minimum size requirement. Storm Lures cast around the pilings are also working well. Reports of school-sized fish are coming from around the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, and larger fish are hitting cut bunker near the mouths of the lower bay rivers.

Tautog are still lurking on lower bay and inshore structures, but these fish are only available for catch and release until late June.

The lower bay rivers are still holding the larger croaker, while the Little Creek jetties and Ocean View are hosting medium-sized hardheads, which are hitting squid. The folks at the Ocean View Fishing Pier report that the best croaker action is still at night. Nice-sized spot also debuted this week off the pier. Sea mullet ranging to near a pound are still providing some variety, where blood worms are working best for both spot and sea mullet.

The black sea bass are beginning to migrate closer to shore, where the Triangle Wrecks will provide good numbers right now. Remember that sea bass must now stretch to 12.5 inches to keep them. Blueline tilefish, grouper, and other deep water species are still available in water over 50 fathoms when the weather allows boats to reach them.

### **Virginia Middle Bay**

Roger, of Jett's Marina reports that the croaker are still biting in the shallow waters of the creeks and rivers. Baits of choice for these fish are squid or shrimp. Striped bass are also being caught, in spite of the large amounts of rain.

Dan, of Smith's Point Marina, continue to see large striped bass being caught by those not afraid to get wet with 20- to 30-pound fish keeping those wet anglers happy. Numerous croaker have been caught in the area as well.

### **Virginia Beach**

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, those fishing in Rudee inlet last week were doing

really well with speckled trout and puppy drum. Taylor bluefish were also available with a few undersized flounder sightings. Inshore, flounder, red drum, black drum and a few shark were all to be had. Offshore, black sea bass, grouper, and blueline tilefish were caught, and anglers are still seeing nice catches of bluefin tuna between 45 and 60 miles offshore.

### **Virginia Piers**

At the Ocean View Fishing Pier, anglers caught croaker, spot, and undersized flounder last week. One angler was able to catch a single keeper flounder.

A little of everything was biting at the Lynnhaven Pier last week. During their first open week of the year, poor weather kept a lot of anglers home, but staff expects next week to be better.

Spot, sea mullet, and a few small catch and release striped bass were found at the Virginia Beach Pier. There was even a rumor of a Spanish mackerel sighting.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier at Sandbridge, sea mullet, croaker, and skate were biting last week.

### **Outer Banks, NC**

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to have consistent, but slow action on several species. Yellow and blackfin tuna, dolphin, wahoo, amberjack, tilefish, and grouper were biting for those working further offshore. Mid-range angling was slower with king mackerel, tilefish and black sea bass. Speckled sea trout could be found in holes just off the beaches.

Pier and shore fishermen had a lot of diversity in their catches. Some of the notable catches included speckled trout, bluefish, sea mullet, puffer, and spot.

Inshore, anglers were having the best luck with speckled trout. These fish were biting around the Melvin Daniels Bridge and the Washington Baum Bridge, primarily in the early morning hours.

South of Oregon Inlet, all of the fish seem to be big. Reports of large drum, pompano and cobia were headlining the news. The bluefish and pompano were being caught around Ramp 43 and 55 with a few drum around the point. Scattered sea mullet, puffer, black drum, and flounder were also found.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet has been producing good numbers of gaffer-sized dolphin lately. Catches of blackfin tuna have also been good with wahoo and king mackerel in the mix. Inshore fishing near Hatteras has been producing large bluefish.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at 757.247.2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resource Commission's [The Virginia Saltwater Review](http://mrc.virginia.gov/swr/saltwaterreview.shtm) as the source of the fishing information.









# ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

## **THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

***WANTS YOUR FISH....  
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,  
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,  
please donate them to science.*

**The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:**

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a  
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,  
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

**Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:**

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)  
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)  
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)  
*Coming soon to the nearly completed  
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)***

As of 01/15/2009



# ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

## Get Hooked! Report at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com)

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com).

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The page has a blue header with the commission's name and logo. Below the header, there's a section titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" with a "Welcome Jgrist," message. A box titled "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" contains text about collecting length data for red drum. Another box titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" lists regulations for tautog, including a closed season from May 1 through June 24, a minimum size limit of 14 inches, and a possession limit of 4 per person. A statistics box on the left shows data for June 16, 2008: 1,457 members, 295 trips, and 3,941 catches. At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and "Help" sections.

# ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

## **MEETING NOTICE**

### **Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board**

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Monday, May 11, 2009

7:00 p.m.

The Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board (RFAB) will meet to review the projects, listed below, which are currently under consideration for funding from the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund (saltwater recreational fishing license funds). The meetings, on these proposals, will be held on Monday, May 11, 2009, 7:00 p.m., at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Avenue, Fourth Floor, Newport News.

Written comments, on the proposals, should be mailed to: Sonya Davis, VMRC Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Newport News, VA 23607 or E-mailed to: [sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov).

Complete project proposals and additional information are available on the Internet at <http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/vsrfd/index.shtm>.

#### **Tentative Agenda**

I. Introduction, Announcements, Comments.

II. Status of Fund.

III. Review of Minutes from the November 2008 RFAB Meeting.

IV. Multi-Year Projects for 2009 Renewal.

- A) 2009 Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Denny Dobbins, Portsmouth Anglers Club. \$7,194.
- B) 2009 Saxis Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournaments (Year 8). Allen Evans, Eastern Shore of Virginia Anglers Club. \$1,325.
- C) 2009 Hope House & Oak Grove Nursing Home Fishing Excursions and Clinics. D. Hurst, C. Macin, Great Bridge Fisherman's Association. \$4,000.
- D) 2009 Youth Developmental "Hooked on Fishing" Adventure (Year 2). A. Fisher, R. Lockhart, Virginia Charter Boat Association. \$5,780.
- E) 2009 Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection (Year 3). J. Grist, J. Cimino, VMRC. \$10,000.
- F) 2009 Deployment of Artificial Reef Structure. Mike Meier, VMRC. \$100,000.
- G) 2009 Estimate and Assess Social and Economic Importance and Value of Menhaden to Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders and Region (3 Year Study) - Year 3. James Kirkley, VIMS. \$154,452.
- H) 2009 Enhancing Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Habitat: Research and Education for Restoration (Year 15). Robert Orth, VIMS. \$98,309.



## ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

- I) Federal Assistance (Wallop-Breaux) Matching Funds, Federal FY 2010. Jack Travelstead, VMRC. \$235,563.
- J) Jun - Dec 2009, Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay. M. Fabrizio, T. Tuckey, VIMS. \$24,544.

### **V. Multi-Year Projects for 2010 Renewal.**

- K) 2010 Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 13). Rob Cowling, Newport News Rotary Club and Coastal Conservation Association-Peninsula. \$6,500.
- L) 2010 Kiwanis Club Children's Fishing Clinic (Year 9). Wesley Brown, Capital District Kiwanis Club. \$6,500.
- M) 2010 Virginia Game Fish Tagging (Year 16). J. Lucy, VIMS and L. Gillingham, VMRC. \$87,800.
- N) 2010 Improving Stock Assessment of Weakfish - Year 3. Y. Jiao, D. Orth, VPI & SU, and R. O'Reilly, VMRC. \$111,356.
- O) Jan-Dec 2010, Estimating Relative Abundance of Young-of-Year American Eel in the Virginia Tributaries of Chesapeake Bay (Yr 9). M. Fabrizio, T. Tuckey, VIMS. \$46,574.

### **VI. New Projects for 2009.**

- P) 2009 Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program. A. Nelson, J. Grist, VMRC. \$3,500.
- Q) 2009 Trophic Position and Ecological Function of Juvenile Menhaden in Chesapeake Bay. C. Jones, J. Schaffler, ODURF. \$43,967.

### **VII. New Projects for 2010.**

- R) 2010 Academic Anglers Children's Fishing Clinic. C. Roberts, A. Bracey, Academic Anglers Fishing Team. \$1,000.
- S) 2010 Understanding the Impacts of Mycobacterial Disease on Striped Bass: When and Where does Mortality Occur in the Rappahannock River. J. Hoenig, W. Vogelbein, VIMS. \$50,535.
- T) 2010 Connecting Productivity in Eelgrass Beds to Recreationally Important Finfishes in Chesapeake Bay: Forage Fishes as Trophic Conduits. R. Latour, K. Sobocinski, J. van Montfrans, J. E. Duffy, VIMS. \$58,329.
- U) 2010 Blueline and Golden Tilefish Population Dynamics Along the Virginian Continental Shelf, Year 1. J. Ballenger, C. Jones, ODURF. \$72,768.

### **VIII. Tentative Dates for Future 2009 RFAB Meetings.**

**Public Hearing (7 p.m.) July 13**

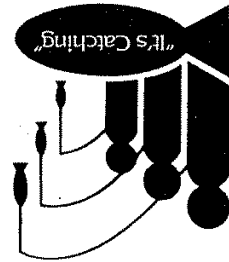
**Work Session (5:30 p.m.) & Final Recommendations (7 p.m.) September 14**

**VMRC DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES;  
THEREFORE, IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS DUE TO A  
DISABILITY, PLEASE ADVISE SONYA DAVIS 757-247-8155, NO LESS THAN 5 WORK  
DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING TIME AND IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS.**



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FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE  
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION  
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR  
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

*Practice*

## CAREFUL CATCH

**REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH**

**Exhaustion \* Loss of Slime \* Wounds \* Time out of Water**